2012

Spotlight on USC: South Carolina Institute for Anthropology and Archaeology

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Members of the Maritime Research Division (MRD) and South Carolina Institute of Anthropology and Archaeology (SCIAA) are uncovering portions of history that have long remained hidden on river and ocean bottoms.

In their research, underwater archaeologists use magnetometer surveys to measure reading distortions of the earth’s magnetic field, side-scan sonar readings to detect objects sticking above the seafloor surface, and sub-bottom profiler to read sediment layers up to forty feet beneath the sand.

After digitally creating maps based on these methods, the MRD staff piece together the layout of the underwater world. The sophisticated imaging tools were instrumental in discovering two Brooke and Dahlgren cannons and several artillery shells from the gunboat CSS Peedee at the Mars Bluff Navy Yard, as well as several shipwrecks in Charleston Harbor.

Sometimes believing leads to seeing.